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Section: Community

Bypass means in-town traffic would **drop by half**

DAVID GIULIANI

MORRISON – Traffic on U.S. Route 30 through **Morrison** is expected to **drop by half** if the state builds a **bypass** around the city. That worries some **Morrison** business owners, who fear they'll lose customers if the state pushes traffic outside of town.

If the state doesn't build the **bypass**, U.S. 30's in-town traffic is expected to increase from up to 11,000 cars a day in 2009 to up to 12,000 in 2018.

If the state builds a **bypass** south of town, in-town traffic on the business route would plunge to 5,800 cars a day, state consultants say. With the northern route, the traffic inside town would **drop** to 7,100.

In November 2008, the city endorsed the southern route. Mayor Roger Drey said earlier this month that the council chose that route because it would fit better into the city's long-term comprehensive plan and that a northern route would be "detrimental to orderly growth."

On Tuesday, the state's consultants presented information on the proposed U.S. 30 **bypass** to **Morrison's** business people. The state isn't expected to choose a southern or northern route for 18 months. It also may decide not to build a **bypass** at all.

Gil Janes, a consultant with Howard R. Green Inc., said the state could post signs on the **bypass** indicating a business district. But he said it wouldn't allow highway signs that list specific businesses such as those seen on interstates.

The state will try to minimize any problems for businesses resulting from the **bypass**, but it's inevitable that some businesses will suffer, he said.

As such, Janes advised the community to do much to promote itself.

"It's not just about signs," Janes said. "There's advertising in newspapers, the Web. There's a lot the chamber of commerce and economic development can do to promote the community."

As for the timeline on the project, he told the audience that he didn't expect it to be done during his career, which he later said would end in 3 to 4 years.

The big issue is funding, which is in short supply at the state and federal levels, Janes said.

"It's impossible for us to predict," he said.

Tuesday's meeting was organized **by** the **Morrison** Business Advisory Group, a city committee. The state plans to hold another informational session June 15 in **Morrison**.

The overall project also includes the proposed widening of U.S. 30 to four lanes from Rock Falls to just outside Fulton.

To attend:

The state Department of Transportation plans to hold an informational session on the U.S. Route 30 project from 1 to 7 p.m. June 15 at United Methodist Church, 200 W. Lincolnway (U.S. Route 30) in **Morrison**.

Go to www.dot-state.il.us/desenv/env.html for more project information.

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